

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 IO-11 SAJ-01 ARA-06 EURE-00

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P R 201226Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5722

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 0409

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJECT: POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

REF: LISBON 0371 (DTG 171404Z JAN 76)

SUMMARY: REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL CRITICIZED "INCREASINGLY DANGEROUS FRICTION" BETWEEN POLITICAL PARTIES FOLLOWING JAN 19-20 MEETING; CRITICISM IS UNLIKELY TO SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECT AFM-PARTIES PACT NEGOTIATIONS. IN RECENT INTERVIEW, PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES SAID HE WOULD NOT BE CONTENDER IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS BUT LEFT DOOR OPEN FOR FUTURE CANDIDACY.

1. REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL DECISIONS: IN COMMUNIQUE RELEASED
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FOLLOWING ITS JAN 19-20 MEETING, REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (RC)

ANNOUNCED IT HAD:

-- STUDIED CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION, NOTING WITH CONCERN "INCREASINGLY SERIOUS FRICTION BETWEEN POLITICAL PARTIES" AND RECENT "PARTISAN ATTACKS" AGAINST CONSTITUTION, AGRARIAN REFORM PROLGRAM, DECOLONIZATION PROGRAM, AND MILITARY FIGURES;

-- STUDIED "DEMAGOGERY" OF SOME MEDIA ORGANS, WHICH "OBJECTIVELY SERVES INTERESTS OF EXTREME RIGHT." GOVERNMENT, COMMUNIQUE STATED, SHOULD HANDLE SITUATION BY FIRMLY ENFORCING PRESS LAW;

-- RECOMMENDED THAT GOVERNMENT PREPARE STUDY OF OPTIONS AVAIL-
ABLE FOR INDEMNIFYING NATIONALIZED PRESS STOCKHOLDERS;

-- REVIEWED LREPORT ON NOV 25 COUP ATTEMPT;

-- ANALYZED SITUATION IN AZORES AND MADEIRA IN LIGHT OF RECENTLY PROMULGATED LEGISLATION ON INSULAR ADMINISTRATION;

-- DISCUSSED RECENT ACTS OF TERRORISM AND STUDIED MEASURES TO COUNTER THEM;

-- NAMED COMMISSION TO STUDY CHARGES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST PRISONERS BEING HELD IN MILITARY PRISON FACILITIES. MEMBERS WERE NOT IDENTIFIED;

-- DECIDED TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS ON REVISION OF AFM-PARTIES PACT STARTING JAN 21.

2. COSTA GOMES SPEAKS: IN AN INTERVIEW FOR SWEDISH TELEVISION PUBLICIZED JAN 20 IN LISBON PRESS, PRESIDENT COSTA GOMEU MADE FOLLOWING MAJOR POINTS:

-- CANDIDACY: COSTA GOMES DECLARED HE WOULD NOT BE CANDIDATE IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS WHICH, HE SAID, WOULD FOLLOW ELEC-
TIONS FOR LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY. COSTA GOMES STATED THAT PAST TWO YEARS HAD BEEN VERY DIFFICULT FOR HIM, AND THAT RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRESIDENT WOULD BE BETTER DISCHARGED BY YOUNGER MAN. PRESIDENT DID LEAVE DOOR OPEN FOR FUTURE CANDIDACY, HOWEVER, WHEN, IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION AS TO WHETHER HE WOULD CONFIDENTIAL

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ACCEPT PRESIDENCY IF "CALLED BY NATION," HE RESPONDED THAT HE WOULD "CROSS THAT BRIDGE WHEN HE COMES TO IT."

-- ROLE OF MILITARY: ALTHOUGH TENDENCY IS FOR MILITARY TO PLAN INCREASINGLY SMALL ROLE IN POLITICS, THEY CANNOT BE ASKED TO SUDDENLY RETURN TO BARRACKS AS SOME POLITICIANS HAVE SUGGESTED, SINCE IT IS THEY WHO GUARANTEE COOPERATION BETWEEN POLITICAL PARTIES AND THAT REVOLUTION WILL NOT BE BETRAYED.

-- NOV 25: NOV 25 COUP ATTEMPT DID NOT REPRESENT TURN TO RIGHT, BUT CLARIFICATION OF POLITICAL SITUATION WHICH HAS ALLOWED GOVERNMENT TO REGAIN AUTHORITY IT NEEDS TO GOVERN EFFECTIVELY. ARMED FORCES AND PARTIES IN GOVERNMENT "ESPECIALLY PS AND PCP" REMAIN DEDICATED TO GOALS OF DEMOCRACY AND PLURALISTIC SOCIALISM.

-- COMMUNISTS: PCP, AT LEAST AT UPPER ECHELONS, HAS BECOME MUCH MORE FLEXIBLE SINCE NOV 25.

-- SPINOLA: FORMER PRESIDENT HAS LITTLE CHANCE OF RETURNING TO LEADERSHIP POSITION IN PORTUGAL. HIS RESIGNATION ON SEPT 28 WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR MANY OF PORTUGAL'S SUBSEQUENT PROBLEMS AND PEOPLE WILL NOT FORGET.

3. CUBAN FLIGHTS THROUGH AZORES: SECSTATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS MEDEIROS FERREIRA CALLED IN CUBAN AMBASSADOR AGAIN ON JAN 19. IN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED SAME DAY, MEDEIROS FERREIRA SAID THAT THE AZORES CANNOT BE USED DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY TO ASSIST ANY FACTION IN ANGOLA. HE ADDED THAT PORTUGAL MUST BE VERY FIRM ON USE OF AZORES IN ANGOLAN CASE "IF WE DO NOT WANT THE AZORES TO SERVE THE PURPOSES OF OTHER COUNTRIES IN OTHER CONFLICTS," HE SAID THAT APPROXIMATELY 18 CUBAN FLIGHTS HAD PASSED THROUGH THE AZORES CARRYING ONLY MEN, AND RETURNING EMPTY. EMBASSY HAS NO REPORTS ON FLIGHTS AFTER JAN 14.

4. NOV 25 REPORT: REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (RC) ON JAN 20 RELEASED TEXT OF "PRELIMINARY" REPORT OF COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO ABORTIVE COUP OF NOV 25. TEXT FOLLOWS LINES REPORTED IN REFTEL. FULL TEXT BEING SENT BY AIRGRAM. ONE OF FIRST RESULTS OF REPORTS PUBLICATION HAS BEEN DETENTION OF FORMER COPCON COMMANDER MAJ OTELO DE CARVALHO (SEPTTEL).

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5. COMMENT: RC STATEMENTS ON "FRICTION BETWEEN POLITICAL PARTIES IS YET ANOTHER DEMONSTRATION OF IMPATIENCE WITH NATURAL BICKERING AMONG POLITICAL RIVALS BY A MILITARY UNACCUSTOMED TO THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS. RC IRRITATION IS UNLIKELY TO MATERIALLY AFFECT OUTCOME OF AFM-PARTIES PACT NEGOTIATIONS. PARTIES ARE DETERMINED TO HOLD THEIR GROUND. THE PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS ON PCP REFLECT LINGERING TENDENCY TO SEE COMMUNISTS IN MOST FAVORABLE LIGHT DESPITE EVIDENCE, SUCH AS REPORT ON NOV 25 COUP ATTEMPT, THAT COMMUNISTS ARE STILL PLAYING EXTRA-LEGAL ROLE.
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